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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000623

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/04/2014

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [IN](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL:MAOISTS ATTACK POLICE STATION IN TERAI,
INDIAN TRUCKS

REF: A. KATHMANDU 588

[1](#)B. KATHMANDU 190

Classified By: AMB. MICHAEL E. MALINOWSKI. REASON: 1.5 (B,D).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: In an apparent retaliation against Indian interests for the March 29 arrest of Politburo member Mohan Vaidya in West Bengal (Ref A), Nepali Maoists torched 18 Indian fuel trucks parked at a customs checkpoint, shooting three of the drivers, in the southwestern district of Kailali on April 3. The Maoists at the scene reportedly distributed written statements claiming the sabotage was justified because of Vaidya's apprehension and warning of future attacks on Indian transportation and joint ventures in Nepal. A nineteenth Indian truck was burned in the south-central district of Rupandehi. The Maoist attacks mark the most direct confrontation between Nepali Maoists, many of whose leaders are believed to be in India, and the Indian Government. In a separate incident, Maoists overran a police post in the southeastern district of Dhanusha on April 4, killing nine policemen. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) In an apparent retaliation against Indian interests for the March 29 arrest of Politburo member Mohan Vaidya in West Bengal (Ref A), Nepali Maoists destroyed 18 Indian fuel trucks parked near the border in the southwest district of Kailali late on April 3. The trucks, which had transported petroleum from India into Nepal, were empty at the time. The Maoists also shot three Indian truck drivers, who are currently hospitalized. Indian Ambassador Shyam Saran confirmed the incident on April 4, adding that the Maoists told the drivers that the sabotage was in retaliation for Vaidya's arrest. The Maoists also passed out literature at the scene warning that all Indian transportation and joint ventures in Nepal would be targeted. Saran expressed frustration that the Government of Nepal (GON) was not able to ensure security for Indian businesses and transport. In an apparently related incident, Maoists destroyed another Indian truck in the south-central district of Rupandehi on April 4.

[1](#)3. (SBU) At about 2015 local time on April 4, approximately 30 Maoists overran a police post in Yadukuwa in the southeastern district of Dhanusha. Army reinforcements have reached the site. Initial reports indicate that nine policemen were killed, including the Inspector, another six were wounded, and as many as fifteen remain unaccounted for. Police sources report that a number of .303 and 12-bore rifles were lost in the attack.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: In the past, the Maoists had limited their attacks against Indian interests in Nepal to the rhetorical, rather than the physical, presumably in order to safeguard their own substantial interests--including the apparent safe haven afforded some of their leaders--in India. Although the Maoists have threatened and attacked Indian joint ventures (Ref B), those attacks caused only minor damage and likely represented nationalist grandstanding rather than a calculated attempt to oust Indian investors. This recent sabotage--and accompanying rhetoric--pose risks to Nepal's fragile economy that are on a different order of magnitude. Landlocked and limited in its manufacturing capacity, Nepal depends on India for nearly all of its raw materials and consumer goods. Lumbering, gaudy and ubiquitous, the Indian trucks used to haul these goods daily offer a ready target for Maoist ire. Already stretched well beyond capacity, Nepali police and Army will be unable to provide security for the hundreds of Indian vehicles that cross into Nepal each day. Should Indian truckers refuse to undertake the risk and halt transportation, the import-dependent Nepalese economy would quickly crumble. That said, we suspect these recent Maoist attacks are more symbolic than strategic. However angry they may be at Vaidya's arrest, the Maoists are unlikely to jeopardize the safety of their remaining leaders, who are known to be operating from India. We expect this latest Maoist "campaign" against Indian "expansionism" to be short-lived.

MALINOWSKI